

THE
LIVES AND CHARACTERS
OF
E MINENT MEN.

DOCTOR TWISSE.

THE Rev. WILLIAM TWISSE, D. D. Pastor of Newbury, a very learned and laborious divine, an eminent light of God's church, and prolocutor of the venerable Assembly of Divines at Westminster. William Twisse was born at Speenham-land, near Newbury in Berkshire, England. His grandfather was a German, who, on some occasions had come over into England, and made way, under the Providence of God, for his grandson being left a very choice blessing to that kingdom. His father was a substantial clothier, and educated him at Winchester school, from whence, at eighteen years of age, he was translated to New College in Oxford, of which he was fellow. Here he made the closest application to his studies, for sixteen years together; and acquired an extensive and very deep and accurate knowledge of Logic, Philosophy, and Divinity. He adorned the learning of the schools by his literary knowledge. He proceeded Master of Arts in the year 1604; and about the same time he entered into holy orders, and

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became a diligent and frequent preacher of the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He was esteemed a popular preacher in the University; and though some judged that his discourses were a little too scholastic, yet they were accompanied with power, and followed with success. He was admired and distinguished among his contemporaries in the University, on account of his closeness of application to his studies, the vivacity and subtilty of his wit, his exact judgment, his holy exemplary life and conversation, and all other valuable qualities which became a man of his profession. And having such advantages, his mind was soon enriched with whatever is valuable, entertaining, or exquisite in literature.

He proceeded Doctor of Divinity, with general applause, in the year 1614, after having given abundant proof both of his learning and industry, in his catechetical lectures in the college chapel, and in his disputations, as well as in transcribing and judiciously correcting the writings of the famous Dr. Thomas Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury, which were to be published by Sir Henry Saville.

He was called upon at this time to preach a sermon on a day appointed for baptising a Jew, one Joseph Barnet, who taught many of the students Hebrew in Oxford then, and deceived many of the university doctors, especially Doctor Lake, Provost of New College, by pretending that he was converted to Christianity; but the day before he was to have been baptised, having filled his purse, he ran away. However, being pursued, he was brought back; and Doctor Twisse, the next day, laid aside the sermon he had studied, upon a supposition that the Jew was to be baptised, and preached a most excellent and remarkable sermon upon his revolt, wherein he shewed God's just judgment upon that rebellious backsliding nation and people, whom he had given up to a reprobate mind, even to this very day. He acquitted himself on this remarkable occasion in such a learned and masterly manner, that he was applauded and admired by the whole University. As Datames, a very brave and great man, following the business of a soldier, first discover-



ed what he was, in the war which King Artaxerxes carried on against the Cadusians^a: So Doctor Twisse first discovered what he was eminently as a divine and scholar, on this occasion. The short time which he had to study his discourse, and the manner in which he handled it, caused him to be much admired. His celebrated lectures every Thursday, in the parish church of St. Olaves, were so much frequented by the gownsmen, and the inhabitants of the town, that his fame reached the court: and when he lay hid in his academic cell, King James I. made choice of him to be chaplain to his daughter Elizabeth, the Princess Palatine, and to accompany her into Germany. Previous to his entering upon his travels into Germany, he very prudently disposed of his patrimony, which was about thirty pounds yearly, and commended it to his brother, requiring him, that out of the rents of it, he should raise portions for his sisters. "A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion," Psal. cxii. 5.

AND when he set out with the Princess, to render the journey both profitable and pleasant, he expounded parts of the holy scriptures daily. Every one is delighted with some peculiar pleasure^b. And they who are born again of water and of the Spirit, John iii. 5. are delighted with the word of God, as their peculiar pleasure. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. And as his judicious expositions and observations served to render the way less tedious^c: so they were also means, along with his many wise and seasonable admonitions, to moderate the grief of the Princess, on leaving her dear country. He taught her from the word of God, "that here we have no abiding city; but ought to seek a better in the world to come." She was also hereby prepared, under the blessing of God, to encounter all those afflictive dispensations of divine Providence, with which she was

^a Nep. Dat. i.

^b Trahit sua quemque voluptas. Virg. Ecl. ii. 63.

^c Vid Virg. Ecl. ix. 64.

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afterward visited and tried: For soon after she was crowned Queen of Bohemia, she was forced to fly from that country, when pregnant, and excluded from the Palatinate, the paternal inheritance of her husband, and driven to live in exile the remaining part of her days. Then she firmly believed, and sweetly experienced, what the Doctor had very often inculcated, That God's gracious Providence doth order all the estates and conditions of all mankind, whether prosperous or adverse, according to his own good pleasure, and for the everlasting good of those who belong to him, agreeable to that promise, Rom. viii. 28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Thus the Princess was both forewarned and forearmed by him. It was probably on account of his eminent service this way, to the Queen, that Prince Rupert, one of her sons, in the time of the civil war in England, coming to Newbury, where the Doctor was minister, behaved with the greatest courtesy and familiarity to him; making him the largest promises, if he would be of the court party, write in their defence, and live among them. But the Doctor had not so learned Christ, and therefore could not comply with these measures. He had not been quite two months at the court of the Elector Palatine, before he was recalled to England, to the great grief of the Queen, and also of her husband. They both lamented the loss of such a jewel. The Prince shewed his great concern at the Doctor's departure, in a Latin speech which he made to him. The most sanguine projects of life are often wonderfully diverted from their purposed course, by the invisible hand of over-ruling Providence.

UPON his return to England, his native country, he closely and wholly applied himself for the glory of God, and for the good of his church. And, in a country village, and mean house, by very close study, he laid the foundation of those rare and elaborate works, which have been the admiration of all the reformed churches both at home and abroad. Afterward, he was made Vicar of Newbury, mayor and market-town in Berkshire, 56 miles distant from

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London, according to Entick *d.* Here he gained vast reputation both by his useful preaching, and his exemplary life. — And divine Providence so ordered, that where he had first seen the natural light, and drawn his first breath, he should be a *burning and shining light*, in a spiritual sense, to guide and direct, as a bright star in Christ's right hand, the inhabitants of that place in the way to heavenly glory. Here he passed the remaining part of his time in this world, with much satisfaction, learning in whatever state he was to be content, to the great comfort, profit, and edification of the people.

THE disposition of his mind was such, that he neither sought the riches of this world, nor yet ecclesiastical dignities and preferments; but modestly rejected them, when they were offered him. He often congratulated himself on his low retired condition, and accounted himself much indebted to the Lord his God, because he had graciously placed him in a mean condition, as being liable to fewer temptations and dangers than in the Episcopal dignity he might have been exposed to. Like Luther, who is said to have had this passage in his last will and testament:—"Lord God, I thank thee, because that thou hast been pleased to make me a poor and indigent man upon earth. I have neither house, nor land, nor money, to leave behind me *c.*"

d Newbury is somewhat remarkable for eminent persons. Here flourished John Winscomb, or Jack of Newbury, one of the greatest clothiers in England, who, in the reign of King Henry VIII. maintained 100 of his own men in the expedition to Flodden-field. It is also the birth-place of Mr. Kenrick, a merchant of London, who left very considerable sums for encouraging the cloathing trade in this town and in Reading. And Mr. Benjamin Woodbridge, who succeeded Dr. Twisse at Newbury, was a very great and eminent man every way.

e Melch. Adam. Vit. German. Theol.

When God raiseth us high by his Providence, we are in danger of lifting up ourselves by pride, even against him:—saying to the gold or preferment, “Thou art my hope;” and to the fine gold, or high preferment, “Thou art my confidence.” And there is a secret malignity in this world’s riches, and in preferments, when they meet with the corruptions of our hearts, to lift us up in pride, and withdraw our hearts from the “living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy,” 1 Tim. vi. 17. And we may suppose that Doctor Twisse felt this in his own experience: for he was particularly acquainted with the gross corruption of the human heart. He declined being Warden of the College at Winchester, after he was chosen, and earnestly requested to accept it, though it was a very lucrative place. It is said to have been equal to the greatest ecclesiastic preferment for profit. He requested the offerers to bestow it upon some more worthy person. And hereby he shewed, says Clark, “That he rather desired to attend his studies in private, than to wax old and live idle in a more honourable place.” A place of solitude better suited his studious disposition, than a place of honour and preferment. He afterward refused a Prebend at Winchester, when offered him; returning thanks to Doctor Moore, his father-in-law, who was Prebendary of Winchester, and other friends, but intreating them to give him leave to abide at Newbury to attend the flock over which God had placed him; saying, “He thought himself unfit for a cathedral-employment: it was hard for him, among such eminent men as the Prebendaries of Winchester, either to sing musically enough, or to preach rhetorically enough.” Robert, Earl of Warwick, also offered him a Rectory; which, because it was a smaller parish than Newbury, and old age was creeping in upon him, and his bodily strength failing, he thankfully accepted, provided that the Earl would take special care to send a pious faithful pastor to Newbury. The Doctor waited upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom he had been well acquainted while they were students together at Oxford, concerning this business. The Archbishop entertained him courteously, and promised to grant his request; adding, that he would represent him to the King for a pious and learned man, and no Puritan. But the Doctor was quick

enough to perceive, from such treatment and language, that snares were laid for him. Accordingly, he returned to Newbury, and thought no more of leaving it. Thus we see, that this very eminent man did shrink from the dignities and preferments in the church of England. Like Quintus Sextius, a Pythagorean philosopher, who flourished in the time of Augustus. He seemed formed to rise in the republic; but he shrunk from civil honours, and declined accepting of the rank of Senator when it was offered him by Julius Cæsar, that he might have time to make application unto philosophy *f*. And as Agesilaus, the valiant Lacedæmonian Prince, preferred a good name before the most wealthy kingdom, and esteemed it far more glorious to obey the laws of his country, than to conquer Asia by war *g*: So Twisse preferred the glory and honour of his royal Master to all Episcopal preferments; and accounted obedience to the laws of Christ's house far more glorious, than to move in the highest sphere under the noisy applause of men. He came to be so well known in the learned world, and in the church of Christ abroad, by his elaborate and celebrated Latin work, in answer to the much famed book of Arminius against Perkins, that the States of Friesland sent him a pressing invitation to accept the place of Divinity Professor, in the University of Francker. This is the highest preferment that a minister of the gospel was capable of in that country. And the States took order to clear the expences of his transportation; but he refused this invitation also. "And how often, says an eminent divine, "do goats clamber up the mountains of preferments, while the poor sheep of Christ feed below *h*?"

He was eminently distinguished by his bold, determined, successful opposition to the enemy's of God's sovereignty and grace, both Arminians and Jesuits. He was an active, unwearied, mighty, and victorious champion in these contro-

f Encyclop. Britan. under Sextius, vol. 17. part 1. Edin.

g Nep. Agesil. 4.

h Arrowsmith.

verfies. And the keen oppofition of his antagonifts was fo far from staggering his faith, that it confirmed his mind the more in the belief of the truth. As the foreft oaks are faid to be better eftablifhed in their roots, by ftormy winds and beating tempefts. He made uncommon exertions in combating the errors of thefe times, and embraced all opportunities for that purpofe; and his abilities always encreafed with his work. He was ever glad to meet with the greateft difficulties from his adverfaries: the harder the task which they prefcribed to him, the better it pleafed him. "A great fpirited man will overcome not only great difficulties, but feeming impoffibilities; yea, he is glad to meet with the greateft difficulties, becaufe they match the greatnefs of his mind;" fays an eminent divine i. He obferved the movements of Arminian errors with peculiar care; and ufed the moft vigorous efforts to flop their progrefs. His attention was every where in this caufe, as is faid with regard to Bifhop Secker. He was the Bradwardine of the age; and he may well be ranked among thofe eminent characters, who have moft fuccefsfully contributed their unwearied exertions for the vindication of the truth as it is in Jefus. He was particularly celebrated for his very able defence of the writings of the excellent Mr. Perkins, againft the Arminians. He hath given abundant proof, in this very accurate and moft elaborate defence, that Arminius's much fpoken of book was not unanswerable. And he hath difplayed, in this remarkable work, fuch induftry, perfeverance, and erudition, as are only equalled by the exquisite judgment, and forcible animated reafoning, which he hath therein difcovered. This great undertaking appears fufficient to have occupied half the life of an ordinary writer. Here he carefully examines the contents of Arminius's book, with the eagle-eye of a philofopher and facred critic; and he leaves not the minutefteft article undifcuffed k.

i Caryl on Job, chap. xxxlii. 12.

k See Rivet's Latin preface to Dr. Twisse's Animadverfions on Arminius and Corinus.

BUT to substantiate more particularly this part of the narrative, we shall here subjoin the joint suffrages of several eminent Divines, of different denominations, both at home and abroad, to this purpose.

THE learned and judicious Rivet, in his Latin preface to Dr. Twisse's Animadversions, above referred to, says, when speaking concerning him:—"Respecting the author, his method, scholastic form of disputation, sharpness, and accuracy, I leave to the judgment of the readers. The most learned men in the whole Christian world, even those who are of the opposite party, confess, that there was nothing hitherto published more accurate, nothing more finished and full, touching this controversy, than what was written by Dr. Twisse. And this ought to please all the godly at least, that always every where he hath been earnest in a good cause; and hath so vindicated it, if any one ever did, from absurd objections, and the calumnies of the adversaries, that out of his labours, not only the learned, but also those who are less exercised in controversies, may find enough to enable them to extricate themselves from the snares of their opponents." And that eminent English divine, Dr. Owen, says, in his epistle prefixed to Dr. Twisse's "Riches of God's Love," "It is well known what sphere this learned author moved in; how far elevated above any possibility of my reaching the least esteem to him or his labours: This I shall take the boldness to say, that this Treatise of our author, comes not any whit behind the choicest of those other eminent works of his; wherein, in this cause of God, he faithfully served his generation.—I doubt not but it will appear to the reader, that he hath dealt with the adversaries of the truth, in their chiefest holds, advantages, and strengths, putting them to shame in the calumnies and lies which they make their refuge."—And the learned Mr. Henry Jeanes, the publisher of Dr. Twisse's Riches of God's Love, says, in a preface to it, "Were this book, that I now present unto thy view, unto which there is not any peer for solidity, and accurateness in scholastic divinity in the English tongue, translated into Latin, I am persuaded that outlandish divines would have such

an estimate of it, as Jerome had of certain books of the martyr Lucian, written with his own hand, which he valued as a precious jewel: or as Beza had of a commentary of Mr Rollock, on the Epistle to the Romans and Ephesians; concerning which he wrote to a friend, that he had gotten a treasure of incomparable worth. And Dr. Ridley, in his Body of Divinity, quest. 12. 13. speaking of Dr. Twisse, says, "I am not ashamed to own my very great esteem of this excellently learned and pious writer, who was as considerable for that part of learning, which his works discover him to have been conversant in, as most in his day." And Dr. Hall, Bishop of Norwich, in a letter to a friend, relative to a small book of Dr. Twisse's, entitled, "The Doubting Conscience Resolved," says, "I return you many thanks for the favours you have done me, in affording me the view of this solid and seasonable piece of Dr. Twisse, in full answer to this pretended questionist. This sculking and disguised challenger could not have met with a meeter combatant; a man so eminent in school-divinity, that the Jesuits have felt, and for ought I see, shrunk under his strength, in their *Scientia Media*.—The man will find himself here over-answered; and receive too much honour from such an antagonist, in that it may be said of him, "tho' thou fallest by the right hand of the great Encas." The elder Spanhiem styles him, *Subtilissimus Theologus simul & Philosophus*, a most acute philosopher as well as divine. And Mr. Neal says, in his History of the Puritans, vol. 3. chap. vii. "He was allowed to be a person of prodigious knowledge in school divinity—a subtle disputant—and withal, a modest, humble, and religious person." The concurring testimony of so many eminent divines must be of considerable importance to establish the truth of the above narrative, and also to ascertain Dr. Twisse's true character. And, here we see, that his literary reputation was not confined to England; but also widely extended beyond the seas. And his most learned adversaries have confessed, that there was nothing then extant, more exact, accurate and full, touching the Arminian controversy, than what he published; nor have any written upon this argument since the publication of Dr. Twisse's works, without making honourable mention of him. And

what Cornelius Nepos, the famous biographer of antiquity, says, with regard to Themistocles, the celebrated Athenian commander, who bravely defended Athens, may well be applied to Dr. Twisse with relation to the Arminian controversy. "Themistocles was great in this war, and no less in peace." And a real attachment to the truth, along with an ardent desire to ascertain it unto the satisfaction of his own mind, was his apology for distinguishing himself so much in a controversial way, as appears from his preface to a book against Mr. Cotton.

Dr. TWISSE refused to read the King's proclamation, commonly called the Book of Sports, wherein the people were allowed to use certain sports on the Lord's day; and which was commanded to be read in all churches, on pain of suspension both from office and benefice: yea, he declared against it. Other faithful godly ministers did the same, for which that severe penalty was inflicted upon them. But when King James was informed of Dr. Twisse's refusal, he secretly commanded the Bishops not to meddle with him.—The King knew well, that though Dr. Twisse had only a small estate, and lived meanly at home, yet his fame was great in all the reformed churches; and that nothing could be done hardly against him, but it would redound greatly to the disgrace of those who did it.

THIS eminent champion for the cause of Christ, now appeared to plead the cause, as it was in the hands of the Puritans, wherein he and they laboured as for life, to use his own expression. He faithfully admonished the people under his pastoral care, to beware of the profanation of the sabbath, by sports, pastimes, May-games, dancings, and following carnal worldly pleasures: and he farther enjoined them to remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. And there was a loud call for the continuation of his faithful testimony, with that of others, against the awful profanation of the Lord's day, by that most irreligious and detestable of all proclamations that ever stained the historic page—the blasphemous

Book of Sports. For King Charles I. renewed his father's edict for allowing sports and recreations on the sabbath day, to such as attended public worship; and he ordered his proclamation, for that purpose, to be publicly read by the clergy after divine service. And, the Puritans refusing obedience to this disgraceful command, were therefore punished with suspension or deprivation *m*. Dr. Twisse still continued to set the trumpet to his mouth, to shew the people *their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins*, Isa. lviii. 1. And he spared neither King nor Parliament, but engaged them with their own weapons set against them: Like David, when he cut off the head of Goliath the giant, with his own sword, 1 Sam. xvii. 50, 51. He, with great ingenuity, turned the act of their own parliament, concerning the sabbath, against themselves. He managed this with great propriety and energy, displaying his usual forcible and animated reasoning on the subject. He also appeared against the publications of these times, in support of sabbath profanation, as the translator of Dr. Prideaux's Lectures, and others, who came on the field in course, concerning the doctrine of the sabbath. And such faithful testimony-bearing, against this very glaring evil, was *not in vain in the Lord*: It had its good fruit; its salutary effect in due time. For when the Parliament went on vigorously with their intended reformation, in the year 1643, they applied themselves to that of the sabbath also. And on May 5, this year, the book tolerating sports on the Lord's day was ordered to be burned by the hands of the common hangman in Cheapside, London, and other usual places, which was done the 11th of May 1643; and all persons having copies thereof, were requested to deliver them up to one of the Sheriffs of London to be burned *o*. By this instance, we may see, that in due time, the faithful followers of the Lamb shall overcome all opposition by his blood, and by the word of their testimony, Rev. xii. 11. And so long as the evil continues, our testimony against

m Hume's Hist. of England, chap. liii. 1633.

n See his Morality of the Sabbath, page 5, &c.

o Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, vol. 3. chap. 1.

ought to be displayed. As one of the ancients, when asked how long he would continue to preach against profane swearing, replied, "Until the people cease from swearing profanely *p*" So Dr. Twisse continued to testify against the Book of Sports, until it was abolished. He ever sacrificed his own ease to considerations of public utility in the cause of Christ. And it was probably on account of his spirited appearances against the corruptions and evils of these times, that Dr. Prideaux once said, "That the Bishops did little consult their own credit because they had not preferred Dr. Twisse, though against his will, to some splendid ecclesiastical dignity." He thought, no doubt, that this would have been an effectual mean to stop his mouth from speaking against them, and the sins of the times. Hence it appears, that Dr. Twisse was an eminent champion for the grace of God, the morality and sanctification of the sabbath, and that Puritan divinity, which the honours of the good old way belong unto.

He was esteemed an able disputant. Dr. Baillie, who had considerable opportunity of knowing what his talents were this way, says, in one of his letters addressed to the presbytery of Irvine, dated London, February 28, 1641, "Dr. Twisse, to our great comfort, is here turned a remonstrant. Dr. Twisse, if there be any dispute, offers to be one. He is doubtless the most able disputer in England *q*."

He generally wished to decline a verbal conference with regard to matters of disputation. And, for this, he gives the following reasons:—Because, these things may be done more quietly by writing; the managers of the controversy will then be kept free from foreign discourse; the arguments on each side may be more properly and deliberately weighed; answers returned with due consideration; and the holy things of God may be more decently handled *r*.

p Vicars' Parliamentary Chronicle, page 382.

q Baillie's Letters, Let. 26, vol. 1. when speaking concerning the petition of the English and Scotch against Episcopacy.

r See his Riches of God's Love, book ii, page 21.

AT the commencement of the civil war, in the arbitrary reign of Charles I. he was forced to leave Newbury by the cavaliers, or King's soldiers and their party. The King's party spared none who were upon the side of the Parliament. And then the Doctor suffered persecution for righteousness sake.

AND upon calling together the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, in the year 1643, he was chosen and appointed by both Houses of Parliament, to be their Prolocutor, in which place he continued until his death. This place he often refused, with his usual modesty and humility. But "he who humbleth himself shall be exalted." Accordingly, he was unanimously chosen to the chair, and filled it, though much against his will. This Assembly of Divines first met at King Henry VII's Chapel, in Westminster-abbey, on Saturday the 1st July 1643. At their first assembling, Dr. Twisse, their Prolocutor, preached a sermon unto them, at which the Members of both Houses of Parliament were also present. This Assembly was prohibited by the King's Proclamation of June 22; and he declared, that no acts done by them ought to be received by his subjects: he also threatened to proceed against them with the utmost severity of the law;—which Dr. Twisse lamented, in his sermon at the opening of the assembly, but hoped that in due time his Majesty's consent might be obtained. Notwithstanding sixty-nine ministers assembled the first day, who were called to meet there; and after sermon the ordinance of Parliament was read, declaring the cause and intention of their convention, viz. the settlement of religion and church government. And then the roll, containing the names of the ministers appointed, was called over, and the names of those who were absent marked. About one hundred and twenty were nominated and appointed. They did not appear there in canonical habits, but chiefly in black coats and bands, in imitation of the foreign Protestants *s.* Several of the ablest divines

/ Vicens' Parliamentary Chronicle, page 352. Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. 3. chap. ii.

of that age will be found in the list of those who were members of that assembly. They were both pious and learned; though, perhaps, none have suffered more in their characters and reputations, since the commencement of the Christian era. This assembly was not a convention according to the diocesan government; nor was it called by the votes of ministers, in the Presbyterian form; but by the Parliament in extraordinary circumstances, for advice in church affairs. Many of the most learned Episcopal divines were nominated, along with the Presbyterians and Independents; and Archbishop Usher, Bishops Westford, Prideaux, and Brownrigg, Doctors Holdsworth, Hammond, Sanderfon, and others;—but they refused, because the King had declared against it. None could enter to hear or see this assembly without a written order from both Houses of Parliament. They met every work-day, except Saturday, which was allowed the divines to prepare for preaching on the sabbath. Their session was generally from nine o'clock in the morning until two or three afternoon; which the Prolocutor began and ended with prayer. About sixty of the English divines were generally present. These were divided into three committees; and no man was excluded who pleased to come into any of the three. Every committee took a portion of the work prescribed, and in their afternoon meeting prepared matters for the Assembly, writing their sentiments in distinct propositions, supported by sacred texts. After prayer, the scribe read the proposition and text, whereupon the Assembly debated in a very grave, learned, ready and accurate manner. “I do marvel,” says Mr. Baillie, one of the Scotch Commissioners to that Assembly, “at the very accurate and extemporary replies that many of them usually make. They harangue long and very learnedly. They study the question well beforehand, and prepare their speeches; but withal the men are exceeding prompt, and well spoken s.” None were called up to speak, but all rose of their own accord, and spoke as long as they pleased without interruption. All speeches were addressed to the Prolocutor. And when they had spoken whatever they pleased upon every proposition and

text, and the replies and duplies were heard, the most part called to the question. Upon this the scribe rose from the table, and went to the Prolocutor's chair, who read the proposition from the scribe's book, and said, "So many as are of opinion that the question is well stated in the proposition, let them say *aye*." When the ayes were heard, the Prolocutor desired those who thought otherwise, to say *no*. When the ayes and noes could be readily known, then the question was ordered by the scribes, and they went on to debate. If the ayes and noes were nearly equal, the Prolocutor called upon them separately to stand up, and they were numbered by the scribes and others. When the weather became cold, the Assembly went to the Jerusalem Chamber, a fair room in Westminster-abbey. At the upper end of it there was a chair set on a frame, about one foot above the floor, for Dr. Twisse, the Prolocutor. Before it, on the ground, stood two chairs for the assessors, Dr. Burgess and Mr. White. Before these two chairs stood a table, where the two scribes did sit, Mr. Byfield and Mr. Roborough. The Scotch Commissioners sat on the Prolocutor's right hand. All warrants from the Parliament to sit in this Assembly were presented to the Prolocutor. He welcomed the Scotch Commissioners into the Assembly at their arrival, by a long speech. Mr. Baillie, speaking concerning him, as Prolocutor of this Assembly, says, "The man, as the world knows, is very learned in the questions he has studied, and very good, and beloved of all, and highly esteemed *&c.*" And Dr. Calamy says, "That he was very famous on account of his wit, learning, and writings." It hath been said that he spake little in this Assembly. And some have interpreted this as an argument either of his weakness, or at least of the decline of his intellectual powers at that time. But as Sophocles, when his sons charged him with dotage, is said to have recited a tragedy of Oedipus Coloneus, which he had last written, and had in his hands; and to have asked, whether that seemed to be the verge of a dotard *&c.* So Dr. Twisse could

f Baillie's Letters. Let. 39. vol. 1.

u Cicero, De Senectute.

easily have silenced such bold censurers, by the exhibition of those vigorous masculine pieces, which he penned in the different periods of his life. But his disposition to decline verbal conference in matters of disputation, (for reasons already mentioned,) his modesty and humility, with the place which he occupied in this Assembly, may sufficiently account for his speaking little there. Beside, Dr. Baillie informs us, that four parts of five did not speak at all; and that among these were many of the ablest divines, and known by their writings and sermons to be much abler than several of the speakers. That silence was no reproach in that Assembly, and did not hinder the work *v*. And some very eminent men, who could speak well, have, notwithstanding, been great lovers of silence, and seldom spoke, except when they reckoned that this was absolutely necessary. It is said, concerning Dr. Bradley, one of the greatest English Astronomers of the age wherein he lived, "That he spoke well, and expressed his ideas with great precision and perspicuity; notwithstanding which he was a great lover of silence:—and it has been observed of him, that he seldom spoke, except when he conceived it absolutely necessary *w*. May we not suppose, that this was the case with Dr. Twisse? And that he was like the celebrated Epaminondas, concerning whom Cornelius Nepos says, "He was desirous of hearing others discourse; for by this he thought one might learn in the easiest manner *x*. And, like the Spectator, he hath sufficiently atoned for his speaking little in this Assembly, by writing himself out before he died, in vindication of the cause of God and truth *y*. Beside what he had printed, he left about thirty pieces completed behind him, according to Mr. Clark. And therefore, as Sophocles, who composed tragedies in his very old age,

C

v Baillie's Letters. Let. 171. vol. 2.

w Universal Magazine for March 1791, vol. 33. London.

x Nep. Epam. 3.

y Spectator, No. 1.

was honourably acquitted from the base charge brought against him by his sons, when they appeared before upright and reasonable judges: So will Dr. Twisse, in like manner, be acquitted from the charge of speaking little in this Assembly.

He was eminently distinguished as a writer; as will appear by the testimonies of many learned men, already brought forward in this narrative. And as these are sufficient to ascertain his true character, as a writer, and discover the nature of his writings in a general way, we shall say little more concerning this. I shall here favour the Reader with an anonymous remark, in manuscript, on this subject, which I received from London, in a book of Dr. Twisse's. "The whole scope, and intent of Dr. Twisse's writings, is, to set forth the absolute Sovereignty and Lordship of God, over all created beings, both angels and men: and to shew, that no man in *nature's state*, with all his acquired abilities, can possibly put forth one act pleasing to God." He often affords considerable entertainment to his reader, by the vivacity of his genius, and the sharpness and elegance of his wit. He sometimes uses jocular or historical diversions, to animate the spirits of his readers, and to preserve them from weariness. Many of his excellent writings are in Latin. One reason of this is, that the Latin language was then more generally a medium of communication and intercourse in divinity, literature, and science, than it is now. God seems to have raised him up in his holy and wise Providence, at this time, and placed him eminently, with the pen in his hand, against all the adversaries of his grace and truth, like another Bradwardine z.

His epistolary correspondence seems to have been considerable: and also the sphere of his literary acquaintance.—He had an epistolary correspondence with Mr. Joseph Mede, some time Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, whom he calls his "worthy friend," in his *Morality of the Fourth Commandment*, page 58.

z See Rivet's Latin Preface, formerly referred to.

THE contentions in Church and State broke his heart. He often wished heartily, that the fire of contention might be quenched, though it were with his own blood. "My soul hath long dwelt with him who hateth peace. I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war." Psal. cxx. 6, 7. He was much grieved and displeased to see liberty given to heresies and blasphemies. He lived under an abiding sense of the gross corruption and total depravity of his nature, which often filled him with astonishment:—a scripture-mark of a regenerate soul. See Psal. xxxviii. 4. and li. 5. Rom. vii. 23, 24. And he was much employed in the confession of his sins. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord," Psal. xxxii. 5. See Psal. li. 3, 4. and Dan. ix. 4. He frequently offered up unfeigned thanks to God, who, of his mere grace and love, had kept him from such honours as might have exposed him to temptations and snares. Abounding in the grace of humility, he was still admiring the gifts and graces of God in others, and highly esteeming and commending them, though they were far inferior to his own. He greatly respected and revered all good men, and thought only meanly of himself: remembering what is said, Rom. xii. 10. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another." He constantly kept a monthly fast in his own family, whereby he endeavoured to quicken his prayers, by which, with great opportunity, he sought God in the behalf of his afflicted church, pleading that he would be gracious unto it, and restore it to peace in his own due time. He was particularly mindful of the church of Christ, in his family fasts and prayers. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Psal. cxxxvii. 5, 6. He applied himself daily to the throne of grace by prayer, with great zeal and fervour of spirit "That he might obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv. 16. And, always before dinner and supper, he read a portion of the holy scriptures, expounding the more obscure and difficult passages, for the edification of his family. And out of them

he gathered arguments, by which he might the more abase himself and his, and with the greater importunity wrestle with God, for the obtaining such blessings and favours as he craved from him. It was a custom, in these times, to read a portion of the holy scriptures at meals, that their souls might be refreshed along with their bodies; that they might see themselves in the glass of the divine law; become better acquainted with the word of God, as their comfort in affliction; and learn to understand the way of his precepts, so as to keep them diligently, and talk of all his wondrous works, Psal. cxix. 4.—27.—49, 50. As is said concerning Pomponius Atticus, the famous Roman Knight, who lived long at Athens, "He had so learned the precepts of the greatest philosophers, that he made use of them for the conduct of his life, and not for ostentation *a*. And Cornelius Nepos also informs us, concerning Atticus, "That none ever heard any other entertainment for the ears at his meals, than a reader; which we think indeed very pleasant; nor was there ever a supper at his house without some reading, that his guests might be entertained not less in their minds than in their stomachs; for he invited those whose manners were not different from his own *b*." It appears from this passage, that men of learning and taste have had some to read history, or other books, for diverting or instructing their guests at table; and that occasion might hereby be given to some useful or learned discourse. And if so, it certainly becomes Christians to read the word of God at their meals, for such noble purposes as Dr. Twisse did.

In this eminent character, piety and learning are united, a beautiful constellation, when they meet in the same person. "Learning in religious hearts, like the gold in the ear-ring of the Israelites, is a most precious ornament," says an eminent divine *c*. Piety crowns learning. Dr. Twisse's singular

a Nep. Attic. chap. xvii.

b Nep. Attic. chap. xiv.

c Arrowsmith's Principles, Applic. 1, Exer. 1.

ministerial abilities, and his very elaborate useful writings, with his truly amiable and excellent character, rendered him universally respected during his life, and hold him up now when he is dead, as a noble example to Christians in general, and to the Ministers of Christ in particular. And it is much to be wished that we were disposed to follow such a laudable example. For, like Constantius, the Roman Emperor, he was both amiable and venerable to his flock and acquaintances *d*. But as it hath always been the case since the beginning, that *he who was born after the flesh persecuted him who was born after the Spirit, even so it was now*. For this very eminent champion in the cause of God and truth, was designed to ruin by the Canterburian faction—as Mr. Henry Jeanes says he found in a manuscript under his own hand *e*.—The chief occasion of this probably was, because his pen was found to be a very heavy hammer in breaking to pieces the modern Pelagian heresy, while he made truth eminently his buckler. For “all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,” 2 Tim. iii. 12.

He was of an easy disposition, and too prone to be deceived by those whom he judged to be godly. He was a Supralapsarian: considering man not fallen, nor yet created, as the object of predestination. Accordingly, in his writings, he goes into the Supralapsarian way of explaining the doctrine of election and of reprobation. And yet he says, “That he reckons that controversy, relative to the order of God’s decrees, to be merely *apex logicus*—a logical nicety,” as he calls it, in his *Riches of God’s Love*, part ii. page 50 *f*.

Dr. TWISSE maintained, as several eminent orthodox divines have done, “That God, by his absolute power, setting aside his decree or free constitution, can forgive sin without any satisfaction.” He hath a whole digression against

d Eutrop. chap. x. 1.

e Preface to his *Riches of God’s Love*.

f See *Vind. Grat. l. 1. degrad. dig. 5.*

Piscator and Lubbertus, on this subject *g*. And Calvin expressly says; on John xv. 13. That God might, by a word only, or by his command, have redeemed us; but he took this way through his Son, that his love might be made more manifest. And Norton, in his Orthodox Evangelist, chap. iii. says, "God, by his absolute power, could have saved man without a Mediator: He is omnipotent, and could have done what he pleased." And Mr. Rutherford, Christ dying and drawing sinners to himself, pages 7, 8, says, "If we speak of God's absolute power, without respect to his free decree, he could have pardoned sin without a ransom, and gifted all mankind and fallen angels with heaven, without any satisfaction of either the sinner or his surety; for he neither punisheth sin, nor tenders heaven to men or angels by necessity of nature—as the fire casteth out heat, and the sun light—but freely."

Dr. OWEN opposes Dr. Twisse, concerning this point, in his Dissertation on Divine Justice; where he speaks very honourably and respectfully of him as his most learned antagonist. He says, chap. xii. sect. 4. "But here, first, of all the antagonists, and who indeed is almost equal to them all, *the very learned Twisse* opposes himself to us." And while Dr. Owen, in this controversy with Dr. Twisse, follows "this veteran leader, so well trained to the scholastic field;"—as he styles him, he constantly calls him, "This great man; our learned antagonist; the learned Twisse; our justly celebrated antagonist; this renowned man; the very illustrious, and the accurate Twisse. The most grave and judicious divines, as Rivet, Burges, Rutherford, and others, have also honoured his name with similar distinguishing epithets.

He was allowed to be an excellent casuist. But notwithstanding all his accomplishments, Mr. Neal says, that he died in very necessitous circumstances, having lost all that he had by the King's soldiers, insomuch, that when some of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster were deputed to visit him in his sickness, they reported, "that he was very sick,

and in great straits." And, Mr Jeanes, in his preface to his *Riches of God's Love*, complains of his having been shamefully neglected; where he declares against the unnatural vanity of England, in preferring strangers above such of their own countrymen, as far surpassed them. And, he adds, of this unjust partiality, no profession hath tasted more than that of divinity; for of our ministers, such whom God hath best fitted with parts and learning for discussing controversies, have been so undervalued in comparison of some foreign divines, whose learning was little better than systematic, as that they have languished in their private studies, and had died in obscurity, unless the fame of their great abilities had been echoed over to us by the general applause of all christendom." But like Cornelius Nepos, we must measure great men by their eminent qualities, and not by their condition and circumstances in this world *b*.

THE great contentions and warm debates in the Assembly of Divines, much disturbed his thoughts; and his disturbed thoughts greatly impaired his bodily health: and his health being impaired, while his private studies and public employments were not abated, he was much reduced. Accordingly, when he spake unto God in the name of the people, and to the people in the name of God, and raised up the hearts of his hearers unto heaven, he fell down in the pulpit. Tho' his constitution was naturally good, and his disposition cheerful; yet, through age, his body was now become heavy and somewhat burthenfome: and therefore, when very warmly employed in spiritual things, his outward strength failed him. — He was carried home, and laid upon his bed, and continued about a year under a lingering indisposition. During this time, he was visited by persons of all ranks, who loved either religion or learning. And, to his friends who visited him, on the day of his distress, he gave remarkable and very comfortable evidences of his faith, Heb. xi. 13. And, under his affliction, he was a rare example of patience and christian resignation. "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience," James i. 3. See Heb. x. 36. And the

b Nep. Eum. chap. i.

patience of the saints, which is the peculiar gift of God, and an eminent fruit of the Spirit, is very profitable to them at all times, and especially in trouble and at death, when it *hath its perfect work*, and faith is changed into the beatific vision of God.

“ Unaw’d by threats, unmov’d by force,
My steady soul pursues her course,
Collected, calm, resign’d;
Say ye, who search with curious eyes,
The source whence human actions rise,
Say whence this turn of mind?

’Tis *Patience*, heav’n-descended maid!
Implor’d, flew swiftly to my aid,
And lent her fost’ring breast;
Watch’d my sad hours with parent care,
Repell’d th’ approaches of despair,
And sooth’d my soul to rest i.

WHEN the time of his departure was at hand, he seriously uttered these following words, which were almost his last:—
“ Now, at length, I shall have leisure to follow my studies to all eternity.” He died about the 20th July, 1646, in the seventy-first year of his age. His body was buried with great honour and solemnity, according to his dignity, and former friendship with his brethren, at the request of the Assembly, in the collegiate church of St. Peter’s Westminster, near the upper end of the poor folks’ table, next the vestry, on the 24th of July, and was attended by the whole Assembly of Divines in a body. There his body rested till the restoration of King Charles II. when his bones were dug up by an hellish order of council, on the 14th September,

i Scots Chronicle, Dec. 13, 1799.

1661, and thrown, with the bones of several others, into a hole in the church-yard of Margaret's, before the back door of the lodgings of one of the Prebendaries. Such is the bellish rage of the church's enemies, that when they have no more that they can do, they will even disturb the bones of Christ's members in their graves.

THE day after his burial, the Parliament voted a thousand pounds to be given to his children, out of the public treasury; but they were cheated out of that, and whatever their father left. Notwithstanding, God was so pleased to appear for them, in his kind Providence, that they obtained a decent support.—“Thou art the helper of the fatherless,” Psal. x. 14. And in the Lord, the fatherless findeth mercy, Hosea xiv. 3. “Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me,” Jer. xlix. 11.

Mr. CLARK says, That he needed neither trophies, marbles, nor epitaphs. He provided monuments for himself by every volume which he wrote, which will be more durable than either statues of brass or marble. And biographers have done great justice to his memory:—He hath a place in Clark's *Lives of Eminent Persons*, London, 1683, folio;—in Middleton's *Biographia Evangelica*, vol. iii. London, 1784;—and in the *Biographical and Martyrological Dictionary*, by a clergyman and others: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, printed by Angus, 1790. And his name well deserves a place in every literary history of England, and in the archives of the reformed churches, both at home and abroad. And, we may well say concerning Dr. Twisse, what Eutropius the Roman historian says with regard to Mithridates, King of Pontus, a very valiant man, who maintained a long war against the Romans, when he gives an account of his death,—“He was a man of great activity, understanding, and conduct &c.

D

* Eutrop. l. 6. 12.

I SHALL here subjoin a part of a Poem, which I lately procured in London, as it especially respects Dr. Twisse's death, as Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly of Divines.

“ THE great Assembly once renown'd,
Whose fame in foreign parts did sound,
Displac'd on earth, in haste remove
Their session to their house above.
Seraphic TWISSE went first 'tis true,
As Prolocutor, it was his due :
Then Borroughs, Marshall, Whitaker, Hill,
George, Gataker, Ash, Vines, White,—still
Sharp swords soonst cut their sheaths—Pern, Strong,
Spurstowe, Tuckney, Calamy, they throng
The gate of bliss, as if they fear
That heaven would fill e'er they got there.
He's with the rest, the praise to sing,
Of our most loving Lord and King;
There no dissenting brethren be,
But all as one, in one agree.
One mouth, one mind, one heart, one way ;
No strife, which side shall bear the sway.
All doubts resolv'd, all knots unty'd,
All truth in the God of truth espy'd :
With warmest love they there embrace
Each other, full of perfect grace :
Their glory's great, their wealth is vast ;
But O the pleasure that they taste
In the tree of life, and in the sight
Of that blest face, that's all delight.

What tongue can tell, what mind can think,
What joy 'tis of this spring to drink !
Go fawning world, tempt me no more,
With thy skin-deep fading store,—
Thy best, thy whole is but a toy
To that these happy souls enjoy.
My God invites to angels fare,
To which thy trash cannot compare :
On swinish husks why should I feed,
When I may eat what's meat indeed ?
O let my heaven-born soul expire
Itself in sallies, and desire
Only to rest, and make its stay,
Where Thou ART ALL IN ALL *for aye.*"



C. M'Lachlan, Printer,
Dumfries.

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